



THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

April, 2009

Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings.

Winter is past and spring is just around the corner. Hooray!

We had a good Winter Meeting at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Decatur, Alabama in January. It was cold, but approximately 30 members and guests participated and enjoyed the weekend and winter birds. Many thanks to Dwight Cooley and Damien Simbeck for leading trips around the area.

The TOS Spring State Membership Meeting will be held the first weekend in May, in Nashville. Please see details on page 2 (registration form is found on page 11).

My term as president ends after the spring meeting, and I'd like to say it has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve the organization for the past two years. My work over the term has been to help TOS represent Tennessee birds & birders. My mantra seems to have been Conservation, Bird Conservation, Habitat Conservation.

We are not Audubon. There is no strong state-wide Audubon Society presence in Tennessee like there is in other states. We, the Tennessee Ornithological Society, "carry the ball" and "do the heavy lifting" for bird conservation in the state. One of our challenges for the future may be to connect with wider networks for increased influence.

Dick Preston takes over as the new TOS president in May. Of course Dick is not new to most of you, and is not new to TOS. So I expect he will hit the ground running, and will lead the organization like the true ex Marine master sergeant that he is. I know you all will welcome him and help him as you did me. Many issues will continue through the next president's term and beyond. The TOS good work and tradition will go on uninterrupted.

I again urge you to use your skills and talents and to contribute any way you can, by leading field trips, conducting counts, backyard surveys and BBS routes. And even by just sharing your enthusiasm for birds with your neighbors.

Hope to see you in Nashville in May.
Come on down to Nashville Town...Where East meets West.

Richard Connors

2009 TOS SPRING STATE MEETING

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, MAY 1-3, 2009

The Nashville Chapter extends an invitation to all TOS members across the state to attend the 2009 TOS Spring Meeting, to be held May 1-3, 2009.

The meeting will be headquartered at the Baymont Inn & Suites located at 111 Penn Warren Drive in Brentwood, TN, off I-65 at Exit 74-B. The hotel is holding rooms for TOS members through April 2. Mention your TOS membership for the special rate of \$74.95, plus tax, per night for a room. Phone 888-551-4666. Also included is a Deluxe Complimentary Breakfast. Members are encouraged to make reservations well in advance. Alternate lodging choices at Exit 74 include: Best Western-Brentwood 800-780-7234, Comfort Inn-Brentwood 877-424-6423, and Hampton Inn-Brentwood 615-373-2212.

Registration will be held in the Meeting Room at the Baymont Inn & Suites Friday evening, May 1, from 5:30-9:00 P.M. and from 6:30-7:00 A.M. on Saturday May 2. Field trips will depart from the Baymont parking lot on Saturday and Sunday mornings at 7:00 A.M.

The TOS Board Meeting and the Saturday evening banquet will take place at Crieveview United Methodist Church, 451 Hogan Rd, across from Ellington Agricultural Center. Birding on the Center grounds is usually productive and it is worth a visit before dinner if you have the opportunity.

The registration fee for the weekend event will be \$10.00 and the Saturday evening buffet supper will be \$20.00 (total \$30 for both). Registration and dinner payments must be received by April 15. Checks should be made payable to Nashville TOS. Please send your checks and registration forms (found on page 11 of this newsletter) to: Susan Hollyday, 211 Wauford Drive, Nashville, TN 37211. Please notify Susan Hollyday if you are interested in a vegetarian option.

The speaker for the Saturday night Dinner will be Gary Myers, Executive Director of TWRA.

Field trips are still being finalized, but will include the locales you have grown to know and love in the Nashville area such as Radnor Lake State Natural Area, Shelby Bottoms, and Beaman Park and Bell's Bend Park, two of the newest parks in the Nashville area. Both parks are located in the Bell's Bend area, which many may remember played host to two endangered Whooping Cranes in winter 2007-2008.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Nashville in the Spring!

Amy Potter, President
Nashville Chapter TOS

TENNESSEE ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY RESOLUTION COMMENDING GARY T. MYERS

WHEREAS, Gary Myers, Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, plans to retire on March 1, 2009, after serving over 31 years in this position;

WHEREAS, he has the longest tenure of any state fish and wildlife director;

WHEREAS, he has been a national leader in developing and implementing the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) since its inception in 1986;

WHEREAS, he was, until recently, Chairman of the Bird Conservation Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and today serves as vice-chairman;

WHEREAS, he has been very active with initiating Partners in Flight (PIF) and other national and international bird conservation projects for many years;

WHEREAS, he was, until recently, serving on the U.S. Tri-national Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and is today a PIF representative to NABCI;

WHEREAS, he has promoted the integration of nongame and game management through aspects of the above-mentioned programs, such as jointly managing for shorebird and waterfowl habitat;

WHEREAS, he has supported high quality bird management in Tennessee which, among other accomplishments, has resulted in the restoration of Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and Peregrine Falcons;

WHEREAS, he has lent his support to the non-profit American Eagle Foundation and his personal blessings helped AEF sustain at least three early challenges to its survival;

WHEREAS, TWRA has utilized state and federal funds for acquisition of many thousands acres of combined nongame and game habitat in Tennessee; and

THEREFORE, NOW BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Ornithological Society commends Gary T. Myers for his many outstanding contributions to bird life in Tennessee, the United States, and the Americas.

Approved November 8, 2008, Chattanooga, Tennessee



At the fall meeting TOS voted to commend former TWRA director Gary Myers for his many years of service to Tennessee and its wildlife. On Feb. 19th TOS president Richard Connors presented to Director Myers a resolution of appreciation from TOS. Gary Myers has already taken a new position with a forest coalition working to protect and manage Tennessee forests. He will share some of his experiences with us as feature speaker at the TOS Spring Membership meeting in Nashville in May

TOS CONSERVATION POLICY COMMITTEE

The TOS Conservation Policy Committee (CPC) was established at the TOS fall meeting of 2002, with the direction: "This committee will study environmental issues of importance to Tennessee birdlife, and develop policy recommendations. The committee will have six members, including the chairperson." The CPC currently consists of six members: Melinda Welton and Bob Hatcher co-chairs, Dick Preston and Van Harris from Memphis, Chuck Nicholson from Knoxville, and Kevin Calhoun from Chattanooga.

Recommended 10-year Moratorium on Sandhill Crane Hunting

At the TOS spring meeting of 2008 in Memphis, the members in attendance developed the following statement:

TOS does not at this time endorse a hunting season on Sandhill Cranes. While crop depredation may be a problem, we believe other management techniques to reduce depredation and slow the crane population growth should be fully implemented prior to the opening of crane hunting. These include active efforts to reduce the short-stopping and concentrating of cranes. We also support research on the economic impact of both crop depredation and crane-watching.

TOS is concerned that:

1. Hunting of Sandhill Cranes in Tennessee will further endanger the Endangered Whooping Crane, which travels with and associates with Sandhills.
2. Transition to from nongame to game designation needs years of study and planning.

TOS has further recommended to TWRA that a 10-year moratorium be established before any Sandhill Crane hunting seasons is implemented in Tennessee.

Endorsement of Added Wilderness Acres to Cherokee National Forest

This proposal was presented at the fall, 2008 TOS Directors Meeting by Jeff Hunter of the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition. TOS prepared a written endorsement, subject to optimum timing for submittal, for wilderness designation of portions of Cherokee National Forest of southeast Tennessee. An opportunity exists to permanently protect several places in the Cherokee National Forest under the Wilderness Act of 1964. This designation would protect some of the Cherokee National Forests' most magnificent, yet unprotected wild lands. These provide excellent habitat for wildlife, incredible hunting and fishing opportunities, and offer remarkable hiking trails, birding, and other recreational opportunities.

The original proposal has been trimmed down to include just the areas in the Tellico Ranger District in Congressman John Duncan's district. All but one of the areas in the proposal are areas that the Forest Service has also recommended as wilderness additions. The one exception is an 800 acre area that includes a campground that has been used by a group of hunters for many years. They used to be able to drive to this site and then the Forest Service closed the road. Jeff Hunter's group is working with these hunters and the Forest Service on the possibility of designating this campground for the handicapped.

Kittatinny-Shawangunk National Raptor Migration Corridor

TOS endorsed Department of Interior establishment of this 250-mile long corridor, for protecting migrating raptors in parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. This area is one of the world's most famous and important raptor migration corridors along a relatively unbroken ridge. The corridor consists of this ridge, plus land extending five miles from the bases of the ridge.

Continued from page 4

Buffalo Mountain Surface Mining

TOS submitted a letter to the federal Office of Surface Mining in opposition to an application to surface mine a portion of Buffalo Mountain of Anderson County, Tennessee. This site lies within TWRA's Sundquist Wildlife Management Area, and lies within prime Cerulean Warbler breeding habitat identified by Buehler et al. (2006). This species is declining more rapidly than any other eastern songbird. All efforts therefore need to be incorporated into the mining plan to avoid further loss of habitat. TOS further recommended that if the permit is allowed, measures must be included in the mining plan to avoid further loss of Cerulean Warbler habitat from the project. At the very least, all available techniques should be used to mitigate impacts using reclamation techniques currently being developed by the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group in cooperation with the mining community.

Bird Conservation Alliance Sign-on letter concerning Northwestern Forests

As members of the Bird Conservation Alliance TOS is asked, from time to time, to join sign-on letters of general bird conservation concern. Recently we signed onto a letter urging the halt to two plans, authorized during the Bush Administration, that could cause serious harm to the Northwest's forests. The Western Oregon Plan Revisions would triple the amount of logging on the federal forests in Oregon managed by the BLM without Section 7 consultation for Spotted Owls, Marbled Murrelets, and salmon. The Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan suffers from political interference with science and, among other flaws, fails to protect sufficient habitat.

Earth Hour / Lights Out Programs

TOS supports a "Earth Hour", scheduled for March 28, 2009 from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. The goal of Earth Hour 2009 is for 1 billion people around the world to switch off their lights for one hour. This is seen as a way individuals can "vote" in support of government policies to take action against global warming. Earth Hour began in Sydney in 2007, when 2.2 million homes and businesses switched off their lights for one hour. In 2008 the message had grown into a global sustainability movement, with 50 million people switching off their lights. <www.earthhour.org>

In the fall of 2009, we are working to have Nashville join the growing number of cities in the United States with a Lights Out Program. In addition to making a significant reduction in Nashville's energy use, a Lights Out Nashville program will save the lives of thousands of migrating birds every year. By simply turning off non-essential lighting in the tallest buildings in the downtown tons of carbon will not go into the atmosphere, thousands of dollars will be saved, and the birds that need a dark sky to navigate will have safe passage over our city. A proposal for a Lights Out Nashville program was submitted to Mayor Karl Dean, through his Green Ribbon Committee in November 2008. Other cities with Lights Out programs include Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Houston, New York City and others. The American Bird Conservancy is a major supporter of this program. <<http://www.abcbirds.org/conservationissues/threats/buildings.html>>

Bob Hatcher and Melinda Welton, Co-Chairs

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Memorable Quote

"Nature is not stranger than we imagine; it's stranger than we can imagine".

British geneticist J.B.S. Haldane

A Call for Volunteers: TOS Constitution and By-Laws Committee

We need 3 good persons with experience in TOS and with an interest in going over all aspects of our structure. Every ten years or so this committee reforms to study our structure and report back to the Board of Directors. Items to consider would include: make up and duties of committees, officer duties and job descriptions, and anything else that might need tweaking or adjustment. This can take a while, as any changes go through two reading and voting sessions with the Board of Directors.

It's time for a check-up to keep us up-to-date. Please contact Richard Connors soon.

- Rconnorsphoto@aol.com / (615) 832-0521

It would be nice to have this committee in place to begin work at the upcoming spring state meeting and to begin working with the new president.

California Condor News

Seven wild California Condor chicks left their nests in California in 2008, an event which marks a successful breeding season. The addition of these seven young birds brings the number in California to more than 80 free-flying birds in the wild.

Additionally, two chicks fledged from their nest in the Grand Canyon in December. This brings the world's total population of California Condors now flying free in the wild to 169. This includes 67 in Arizona, 83 in California and 19 in Mexico.

This is a significant milestone since it is the first year in the condor recovery program where there are more condors flying free than there are in captivity. The goal for the condor recovery plan is to produce at least 150 members in each of the U.S. populations, including at least 15 breeding pairs.

Source: *The Birding Community E-Bulletin*. Archives:
<http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html>

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE

If you have not sent in your recent CBC data, please do so soon. As the compiler for the Tennessee CBC's for the *Migrant*, I cannot access the effort data at the Audubon web site (I would need everybody's password). Therefore I would like to have the compilers send the effort data for their respective CBC to me separately. This should include the following:

- 1- hours and miles by car, foot, owling, and any other means (as boats, etc.)
- 2 - start and end times of the count
- 3 - Any feeder hours and names
- 4 - weather conditions and temps.
- 5 - number of birding parties
- 6 - any personal observations, such as record high or low numbers for your count, any other unusual circumstances that impacted your count, total number of species ever for this count, etc. Anything like this helps other folks to get more out of the individual count reports.

Thanks in advance.

Ron Hoff

Tennessee Bird Count Compiler

Tennessee Ornithological Society

282 Hackworth Lane

Clinton, TN 37716

865-435-4547

aves7000@bellsouth.net

Mark Armstrong Receives 2008 J.B. Owen Award for Support of MAPS

The Knoxville Bird Club has selected two winners of the 2008 J.B. Owen Award. As reported in the September newsletter, Than Boves of the University of Tennessee Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries received an Owen Award of \$500 for support of his project on Relationships between Cerulean Warblers, Timber Harvest, and Ornamentation. The second winner for 2008 is KTOS member Mark Armstrong, who will receive an Owen Award of \$418 for support of his project on The MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity Station) at Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge (SIWR). Mark received the 2006 Owen Award for support of SIWR MAPS activities in which 410 individuals were banded in May-August 2007. An "After MAPS" phase was initiated to see how long some of the late breeders remained at the refuge and was extended to include fall migration and winter. In the "After MAPS" phase, 371 individuals were banded. Mark will use the 2008 Owen Award for replacement mist nets and for construction of a canopy over the banding table to provide shade while the station is in operation. The projects of Than Boves and Mark Armstrong provide outstanding opportunities to achieve the Owen Award goal of promoting the welfare and conservation of birds in Tennessee.

KTOS Supports Operation Migration as a MileMaker

KTOS has contributed \$208 in support of the MileMaker 2008 campaign of Operation Migration. Operation Migration has played a leading role in the reintroduction of endangered Whooping Cranes into eastern North America since 2001. By sponsoring Mile 574 in Tennessee, KTOS has become part of what has been described as "The most successful species reintroduction in wildlife conservation history." Seven states, approximately 1285 miles, and an unknown number of migration days lie between the 2008 Whooping Crane chicks' fledging ground at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin, and their wintering grounds in Florida. Operation Migration relies on the support of conservation-minded organizations and individuals to help defray the costs of the annual ultralight-guided migration with the newest cohort of young Whooping Cranes.

For additional information:

<http://operationmigration.org> or call 1-800-675-2618.

Upcoming Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge April Bio-Blitz

Celebrate Earth Day and join us for the inaugural "Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge BioBlitz" to take place from 3 pm on Friday, April 17 to 3 pm on Saturday, April 18. During this 24-hour event, teams of taxonomists will target refuge flora and fauna to identify as many species as possible. Professional and amateur teams are tentatively scheduled to inventory birds, amphibians and reptiles, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, trees, spring wildflowers, mushrooms and more.

Tallied species' lists will reveal early spring taxa present at SIWR. Coupled with future surveys held during different seasons, the blitzes will provide important snapshots of the natural communities at SIWR. The BioBlitz project will complement the long-term species inventories being compiled for the refuge.

You don't need to be an expert taxonomist to participate. More eyes and ears are better! Plan to join us in this opportunity to learn more about SIWR, and make important contributions to understanding its natural communities.

For more information or to participate, contact

- David J. Trently (865) 531-1473
naturetours@avianpursuits.com
- Wayne H. Schacher (865) 457-4355
whschacher@natreserv.com

June 30th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:

Theresa Graham, Editor
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060
(901) 465-4263 (home)
(901) 748-9324 (fax)
e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net

CHAPTER NEWS

The **BRISTOL BIRD CLUB** has been very active this winter.

We lost our meeting place when ETSU closed its Bristol Campus, but were fortunate to find a new home at the Bristol, VA Public Library. We have only had one meeting there, but found the facility to be very advanced with everything we needed to put on programs, and easy to access.

Our 14th annual Christmas Party was held at the home of Michelle Sparks. Twenty-three birders braved the ice and snow to gather for a great evening of singing and fellowship. The trip for the Worley's went from one and a half hours to three and a half hours due to icy roads.

Our 5 Bristol Bird Club sponsored Christmas Bird Counts in the area were well represented with record turnouts and good birds. A big THANK YOU to all who participated.

John Moyle, Bill Grigsby and Zellie Ernest worked with Meadow View Golf Course to help obtain certification as an Audubon Co-operative Sanctuary for its Cattails wetlands. Good job guys.

We found great birds when we invaded Southwest Virginia for our annual Burkes Garden Field Trip. Fourteen members found a pleasant day that produced 2 Bald Eagles, 1 Rough-legged Hawk, 18 Red-tailed Hawks, Red-headed Woodpeckers and numerous other species.

Larry McDaniel and wife Janet threw a fabulous Mardi Gras party that brought forth the crazy folks in the area. Their neighbors will probably never let them have another. The police confiscated all pictures to add to their mug books. Thanks Larry and Janet.

We have lots of great field trips planned in Tennessee and Virginia and everyone is invited to join us.

If you are in our area be sure to holler at us and someone will assist you in finding birds and helping you find your way home.

Dave Worley, President

The **CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER** sponsored mile 637 of the Whooping Crane migration path in honor of Ken Dubke. Everyone who has birded for any length of time around Chattanooga (and the state for that matter) knows Ken. He has been active in many birding activities. He has particularly been a promoter of the Sandhill Crane festival near Chattanooga and is just as interested in Whooping Cranes.

Field Trips

Harold Birch lead a field trip on February 21 to Nickajack Dam and then into nearby Stevenson, AL. The highlight of the day was the spotting of a Loggerhead Shrike on a power line by Hwy 72 both on the way to and from Stevenson.

Late in the afternoon of Feb. 28, thirty-one club members and guest meet at Hayden Wilson's farm near Dunlap. Hayden treated the group to good looks at three Barn Owls in his silos. Then about dark we got to watch and hear the displays of American Woodcock on his farm. We also got great looks of two Screech Owls. Then everyone went to Hayden's house where we were treated to hot dogs and plenty of other food.

Promotion of Birding

On Saturday, February 14, some club members helped the Rosewood Retirement Center with the Great Backyard Bird Count.

On Saturday, Feb. 28 from 6:00 AM – 8:00 AM, club president David Stone was on Tony Sander's WGOW Talk Radio Outdoors Show in Chattanooga promoting birding and the TOS. The show host said he was surprised by how many calls they received. None were from club members so we know there is a lot of untapped interest out there in birding.

On Saturday, March 28, the club had a booth at the Outdoor Chattanooga Expo.

On the afternoon of Feb. 28, several Chattanooga TOS members got a van guided tour of the 2,800 acre area set aside for a City/County park at the site where the new Volkswagen plant is being built. Officials are interested in the club helping them plan how to create and maintain the park for the best bird habitat.

David Stone

CHAPTER NEWS

KNOXVILLE CHAPTER

Highlights From Recent Meetings:

November - Dollyann Myers and Ron Hoff presented the program and shared photographs and information about their 17-day pelagic trip to Southern Polynesia in September/October of 2005. This is a little known and little visited area of the world. The slide program showed some of the unusual birds and landscapes of this region. Photos of Tuamotu Sandpiper, Bristle-thighed Curlew, and 40 lb. Wahoos were included.

December - Harriet and Harold Howell spent a wonderful 10 days in Costa Rica beginning the last week in January 2006. The trip was not specifically a birding trip, but they did see and photograph a good assortment of birds and mammals. A lot of territory was covered in a short time, from the modern capital city of San Jose to Los Chiles on the Nicaraguan border and from Manuel Antonio National Park on the Pacific to Tortuguero National Park on the Caribbean. Habitat included lowlands rainforest, cloud forest and the top of the mountains, with a couple of volcanoes thrown in for good measure. Harold presented the birds and mammals in the order in which they saw them, and discussed a bit of the habitat where they were found.

The January program was a slide show presentation from several members of their birding travels over the past year.

February - Lyn Bales who is a member of KTOS presented information about his research and writing of his upcoming book on James T. Tanner who conducted research on the Ivory-Billed Woodpeckers on the Singer Tract in NE Louisiana and other parts of the Southeast in the 1930's and 1940's. His wife, Nancy Tanner, who is a member of KTOS, is the last known living person to have seen an Ivory-Billed Woodpecker in December 1941. Lyn's book will be focused more on Dr. Tanner himself and the difficulties encountered working in a remote wilderness with a little known bird. Lyn is a naturalist and manager at Ijams Nature Center and has been there for 10 years. His first book, Natural Histories of the Tennessee Valley (available from UT Press), is a delightful book about people and animals in Tennessee.

Audubon Christmas Bird Count:

GSMNP - Sugarlands, Sunday, December 14, 2008
David Trently compiler

Norris, Saturday, December 20, 2008
– Chuck Nicholson compiler

Cades Cove, Sunday, December 28, 2008
– Susan Hoyle compiler

Knoxville, Saturday, January 3, 2009
– Dean Edwards compiler

<http://www-chaos.engr.utk.edu/~kde/birds/kcbc/KCBCpage.html>

Kathy Bivens, Secretary

GREENEVILLE CHAPTER – Winter brought several notable species to Greene County, some present in unusually high numbers.

Waterfowl included Snow Goose (1 white, 2 blue, on 21 Jan., 12 Feb., and 21 Feb.), Ross's Goose (1 at three sites on 26 Dec., 12 Feb., and 21 Feb.), and Canvasback (1-13 on 29 Jan. and on several days in Feb.). This was an especially good showing for Canvasback, which is not found every year in the county. Noteworthy raptor sightings included Osprey (27 Dec. and 18 Jan.), Bald Eagle (3 and 14 Feb.), and Merlin (1-2 on 6 Dec., 17 Jan., and 14 Feb.). Four Sandhill Cranes, a rare treat, were observed on 14-15 Feb. American Woodcock was detected for the 9th consecutive year at a site in Greeneville in early Feb., and Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen in the Mosheim area for the 56th consecutive month, also in Feb. Two Common Ravens were found at low elevation on 22 Jan. and 12 Feb. Horned Lark was observed on several dates, with a high count of 53 seen on 6 Dec. A lone male Pine Warbler was found on 3 Jan. Pine Siskins were plentiful throughout the period—offering the best showing in the county in over 15 years.

The chapter's Spring Bird Count will take place on Saturday, 25 Apr. Guest participants are welcome. For info on count routes and other details, please contact Don Miller (pandion@embargmail.com; 423-639-4100).

Don Miller, President

CHAPTER NEWS

The **LEE AND LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society has held two Christmas Bird Counts for decades. One count is based in Elizabethton and the other in Roan Mountain.

The 66th consecutive Elizabethton Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008, with 27 observers in six groups participating. They tallied 73 species and 6,668 individuals. The species total is slightly above the recent 20-year average of 72, according to count compiler Rick Knight. The all-time high was 79 species found in 1995 and 2001. According to Knight, foremost among highlights was a Le Conte's Sparrow found near the Elizabethton Municipal Airport. This was the first Le Conte's Sparrow on the Elizabethton CBC and just the fifth record in the five-county area. The sparrow was seen again on Dec. 16, 2008.

Other notable birds on the count included:

Gray Catbird, 1; this is the fourth time in the last six years this bird has been found on this count. Previously, Gray Catbird made the count only once in 1949. Palm Warbler, 1; fifth time in last 10 years. This bird, too, had only once been seen prior to the last ten years, being first recorded in 1947.

Chipping Sparrow, 4; fifth year in a row for Chipping Sparrow on the count and the eighth time in the last 11 years. This is also a species rarely recorded on early counts. Pine Siskin, 204; this is the first triple digit count since 1989. Pine Siskin has been found 11 times in the last 20 years.

Knight pointed out that this count also racked up all-time high numbers for five species: Bufflehead, 266; Bald Eagle, 5; Red-tailed Hawk, 21; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 34; and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 32.

With 2,050 individuals, the Eurasian Starling was by far the most abundant bird on the count. Other birds with high numbers included Rock Pigeon (430) and American Crow (414). Participants in the Elizabethton CBC included Fred Alsop, Jim and Darla Anderson, Lisa Tyler, Joe McGuinness, Kim Stroud, Don Holt, Dianne Draper, Brookie and Jean Potter, Charles Moore, Glen Eller, Jerry Bevens, Roy Knispel, Tom McNeil, Rob Biller, Michele Sparks, Gary Wallace,

Bryan Stevens, Josh Ferry, Megan Elrod, Miriam Perkins, Rick Knight, Gil Derouen, Kathy and Eric Noblet and Ellen Parker.

The 56th Roan Mountain Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, Dec. 20, 2008. According to compiler Rick Knight, this count was started in 1950. Weather conditions, however, have caused the cancellation of the Roan Mountain CBC at three different times — in 1959, 1961 and 1972. This year, 15 observers in three groups tallied 46 species and 1,244 individuals. The recent average over the last 20 years has been 45 species and the all-time high was 55 species in 1987.

Four species were found in all-time high numbers for this count: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (9), White-breasted Nuthatch (24), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4) and Field Sparrow (36). According to Knight, Ruby-crowned Kinglets are seldom found on a Roan Mountain CBC. In addition, this year's count yielded the most Red-breasted Nuthatches (60) since 1993 when 63 were tallied. The 93 Pine Siskins counted was the most since 173 in 1991. The Eurasian Starling, with 315 individuals counted, was the most frequently tallied bird on this year's Roan Mountain CBC. The only other bird found in triple digits was the American Crow with 118 individuals reported.

Participating on this year's Roan Mountain CBC were: Fred Alsop, Larry McDaniel, Lisa Tyler, Michele Sparks, Rob Biller, Rick Knight, David Hall, Don Leech, Michele Villeneuve, Tom McNeil, Brookie Potter, Roy Knispel, Don Holt, Dianne Draper and April Mattes.

Officers for the chapter include Don Holt, president; Larry McDaniel, vice president; Gil Derouen, treasurer; and Mary Anna Wheat, secretary. Upcoming events are the chapter's annual five-county spring bird count and a spring banquet.

Bryan Stevens, Editor

Happy Birthday Darwin!

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth - 12 February 1809

Darwin is famous for describing in rigorous detail that species change from common ancestors over time through the process of natural selection. Natural selection came to be widely seen as the primary - although not exclusive - explanation of biological evolution and forms the basis of modern evolutionary theory today.

The Darwin bicentennial will be recognized across the globe. Those of us interested in birds should note that Darwin dealt with birds many times throughout his scientific career, from early and amateur inquiries into Rock Pigeons to the puzzle of Galapagos finches. November of this year will also mark the 150th anniversary of Darwin's seminal publication, *The Origin of Species*.

Source: "The Birding Community E-Bulletin". Archives: <http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html>

TOS SPRING MEETING 2009 REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

TOS Chapter: _____

\$_____ for _____ Registrations @ \$10 each

\$_____ for _____ Dinner Reservations @ \$20 each

\$_____ Total amount enclosed. Make Check payable to Nashville TOS

Vegetarian Meal? Yes ☐ No ☐

Mail registration form and check to: Susan Hollyday
211 Wauford Drive
Nashville, TN 37211



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treasurer@tnbirds.org

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